

JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

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PIONEER EVANGELISM IN ACTION

A National Conference of the Cooperative Evangelism Committee of the United Church will be held at the YWCA Lacy Hall in Hayama January 23-25. In addition to twelve pioneer evangelism centers in Hokkaido, there are sixty-two such projects in various parts of the other three islands. (Sixty-five persons are expected to gather for the conference.) One is in charge of Mr. Seiya Imanishi, who was born in rural Japan, passed the examination and in 1952 became a licensed preacher after graduating from the Department of Philosophy of Kyoto University. Two years later he located in Azumigawa, Shiga Prefecture where there was no church or preaching center. At first he conducted street meetings and after some seekers were enlisted he began to hold monthly services in homes. Today there are only ten regular attendants, three of whom have been baptized, but because of the excellent reputation Mr. Imanishi has made in the village a building, which will include a day nursery, is now under construction.

JAPANESE CHRISTIANITY

THE HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN MISSION IN JAPAN

FROM THE FIRST INTRODUCTION OF THE GOSPEL

TO THE PRESENT TIME

BY THE REV. J. H. COOPER, D.D.,

OF THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

NEW YORK:

SHINSEI KAI PLANS TO EXPAND -- NEW BAPTIST OFFICERS

The Shinsei Kai (New Life Society), an organization of churches formerly affiliated in the East Japan Baptist Convention, is planning to hold a convention in August 1957 at which reorganization and the problem of continued relationship with the United Church of Christ in Japan will be discussed. A special committee on relations with the United Church was appointed in 1956. There are at present forty missionaries in Japan representing the American Baptist Church. During 1957 the Shinsei Kai hopes to double this number. The Society hopes that at an early date a missionary can be stationed at Nemuro, Hokkaido where a Baptist church was first organized in 1912 and that later other missionaries can be located elsewhere in the island. Construction of a new Gospel Ship (Fukuin Maru) for work among the islands of the Inland Sea is also projected. (The first Gospel Ship was started fifty five years ago by Captain L. W. Bickel.)

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The Reverend Kiyoki Yuya became Chairman of the official board of Baptist Convention on January 1. Other new officers are: Shinji Higasa, General Secretary, Hiroshi Mure, Recording Secretary, Michizo Yoneya, Head of the Financial Department, Takio Koga, Head of the Social Department, Mutsu Ikebe, Head of the Women's Department, and Buntaro Kimura, Special Director.

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The Reverend and Mrs. Charles Seasholes of the First Baptist Church of Dayton, Ohio, who are on a round-the-world tour commemorating the 25th anniversary of their pastorate, are visiting Japan January 23-30. Mrs. Seashole's sister is a teacher at Tsuda College.

A BACKWARD GLANCE

In reviewing the events of 1956, the Christian Press (Kirisuto Tsushin) emphasizes the following: (1) The visit of Dr. Billy Graham which was remarkable not only for numbers who heard his message but for the degree of interdenominational cooperation achieved in sponsoring his meetings. (2) The continued effectiveness of the Lacour Special Evangelism Group which visits Japan each summer. (3) The meeting of three hundred "volunteers" at Amagi Sanso under the auspices of the Volunteer Visitation Evangelism Council of the NCC.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS TO MEET

A National Conference on Christian Education is to be held at the Yuzaki Hotspring in Wakayama Prefecture on January 25-26 to discuss "The Contribution of Christian Universities to the Present Age." Representatives of some fifty schools are expected to attend. Speakers will be Professor Shinko Sakurai of Aoyama Gakuin University, Professor Katsumi Matsumura of Kansei Gakuin University, and Professor Keinosuke Nakagawa of Seinan Gakuin University. The program was arranged at a meeting of the Central Committee at International House in Azabu, Tokyo on January 10.

BIBLE SOCIETY PROMOTION PROGRAM

The Japan Bible Society is trying to secure and train forty colporteurs in order to achieve the goal of two million sales of Bibles or portions during the current year. Special emphasis will be given to the islands of Kyushu, Shikoku and the adjacent areas on the main island. A special Bible exhibition car left Tokyo on January 9 for Hiroshima. Short stop-overs enroute will be made at Shizuoka, Nagoya, Osaka, and Okayama. The Reverend Ishikawa of the Extension Department of the Bible Society left for Beppu in Kyushu on January 14th to assist the project. In addition to colporteurs the Society plans to secure the cooperation of five hundred stores throughout the country to handle Bible sales.

DR. E. STANLEY JONES COMING

Following a reception and orientation at the Christian Center on the afternoon of February 1, Dr. E. Stanley Jones will visit the Hachioji Toyotama Boys' Reformatory and attend a meeting of the Visitation Evangelism Council at the Ginza Church on February 2. The following day he will preach at a military base in Saitama Prefecture, visit the Chofu prison and speak at the Iidabashi Korean Church. Monday February 4 he will address an interdenominational ministerial rally at Tokyo Union Church and preach in the evening at a meeting in the Koto district. The following two days will be devoted to meetings at schools in Tokyo. February 7 he goes to Yokohama and the following day has three meetings in Yokosuka, a conference for ministers in the morning, for women in the afternoon and a public meeting at the Municipal Center in the evening. He leaves Japan on April 23rd.

HEIFERS FOR RELIEF

Two hundred fifty milch cows are being brought to Japan by Church World Service. Two hundred of these will be sent to Hokkaido to aid the famine stricken areas, and twenty to a farm in Hokkaido operated by the Episcopal Church. The remaining thirty will be distributed in the main island. As in previous instances of this nature, each farmer receives a cow free and becomes full owner after his cow has born a calf which is given to another needy farmer. The distribution of these cows is intended not only to aid the farmer in providing both an additional source of food and income, but to help him diversify his farm. Too many of the farmers attempt to adapt the methods of the mild main island to the rigorous climate of the north and thus court disaster. The government of Hokkaido is assisting Japan Church World Service in promoting this project.

HOKKAIDO AID CONTINUING

The United Church of Christ in Japan has decided to continue aiding people in the famine stricken areas of Hokkaido by sending relief "packages of love" and raise a million yen for other types of aid. Mr. Kazuo Nomoto, chairman of the Social Problems Committee, who recently made an on-the-spot investigation reports that in one village, which was established ten years ago, the crops were only 30%-60% normal, no regular straw mats (tatami) are used in the homes, and only four quilts were available for a family of eight. In some cases the horses had eaten their straw and, of course, he adds, there are no baths. Inability of the people to pay their taxes has resulted in public servants receiving only about 60% of their salary. Such a situation affects the churches in numerous ways, according to Mr. Nomoto. Cash income is low. Parents are unable to pay their kindergarten fees so the children do not attend. Girls are sold to the brothels, so no longer attend services. Altogether their plight is serious in the extreme.

HOKKAIDO GOVERNMENT EXPRESSES APPRECIATION

Mr. Yoshihiko Kajiyama, Assistant Director of the Administration Bureau of the Pioneer Department of the Hokkaido Government recently called at the offices of Japan Church World Service to present a letter of appreciation from the Governor of the island and request continued assistance. An estimated 1,071 tons of rice is needed. In addition to this type of assistance Church World Service is considering the shipment of flour, butter, milk and clover seed for spring planting.

FOUR CHRISTIAN RALLIES TO BE HELD

Four regional Christian rallies will be sponsored by the United Church of Christ in Japan this fall instead of the two which have heretofore been held in Tokyo and Osaka. This year Hirosaki in the Northern part of the main island (Honshu) and Fukuoka on the island of Kyushu will also hold simultaneous rallies. Plans call for an attendance of more than one thousand at each place. Ministerial conferences will precede each rally. This is to be a part of the Centennial Commemoration Program.

HOME FOR STREET GIRLS

For the past five years six women members of the Japan Committee of German Missions have been conducting a Midnight Mission for street girls in Tokyo. In order to make contact and encourage these girls to leave their life of shame, pamphlets are distributed in the Red Light districts every evening from eight to ten. Then those that go to the home maintained for them in Eifuku-cho, Suginami are assisted in every manner possible to rehabilitate themselves for a normal life. Admittedly the task is not an easy one and in the nature of the case little publicity can be given to the results. But the task is rewarding, in spite of the fact that some fail in their resolutions and return to their old ways.

JAPAN'S SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION UNSOUND

Dr. Michio Kozaki, Chairman of the National Christian Council, in a New Year's statement published in the Japanese Christian Press (Kirisuto Tsushin) expresses great concern for the high suicide rate prevalent in Japan, as compared with other countries, and the need for the Christian gospel with its emphasis on the sanctity of human life. Japan's material progress continues to increase, but its spiritual foundation, says Dr. Kozaki, is not sound.

YOUTH LEADERS CONFERENCE

The Youth Department of the National Christian Council will hold a National Youth Leader's Conference at the YMCA camp in Manazuru-machi, Kanagawa Prefecture from January 30 to February 1. Forty leaders are expected to attend. The theme for the conference is "Christ the Mediator". Among the speakers scheduled are the Reverend Atsumi Nagata, a minister of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and Chairman of the Youth Department of NCC ("Youth in Asia"); the Reverend Moritami Inagaki, director of the Japan Christian Endeavor Union ("The Pacific Conference of World Christian Endeavor"); the Reverend Shogoro Ushimatsu of the Evangelical Lutheran Church ("Churches and Youth in Northern Europe"); Mr. Kentaro Shiozuki, a secretary of the National YMCA ("World Student Christian Federation Convention"); Kazumitsu Aihara of the National YMCA Headquarters ("Churches in China"); and Miss Akiko Kubota of the YWCA ("Asia Women's Convention").

A YMCA SECRETARY LOOKS AT COMMUNIST CHINA

Although somewhat late for reporting as news, readers will be interested in a visit to Communist China by Mr. Kazumitsu Aihara, a secretary of the National YMCA, to attend an International Youth Group Meeting last November. Some fifty delegates were present representing twenty-two countries. In reference to the meeting, Mr. Aihara said, "The first thing that impressed me about China is that the government has a sympathetic attitude. We didn't have to worry about our property being stolen. Prisoners wear the same garb and eat the same food as the guards. There are no isolation cells and the doors are not locked, because no one will try to escape. Young people are full of ambition and are proud of being Chinese nationals.. I envied them their politics, which aims at the welfare of the people. Church and YMCA and YWCA activities are vigorous. Everyone cooperates. A Chinese Christian reported that whereas in former days Christians were looked down upon as believers in a western religion, today they are respected as persons of intelligence. People cherish a friendly feeling toward the churches of America because they were taught how to carry on YMCA programs. There is a desire for the resumption of friendly relations with Americans, even though it would be necessary to oppose American political positions." Mr. Aihara is a graduate of Tokyo University. He returned to Japan in 1955 after being detained in the USSR from the end of the war.

IN BRIEF

Japan Church World Service relief during 1956 reached the following totals: 748,476 pounds of butter, 909,467 pounds of milk, 1,108,200 pounds of US rice, and 25,700 pounds of beans. The monetary value of this is estimated at over a million dollars.

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Since the New Year two carboards of relief supplies and "Goodwill Gifts" received from schools have been sent to Hokkaido by Church World Service. Money collected at the churches for relief totaled ¥500,000 as of January 9.

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About 1,000 persons attended the YWCA community Christmas program in Tokyo. The ¥30,000 offering received was used for Christmas parties in juvenile delinquent homes.

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The World Week of Prayer will be observed in Japan beginning January 20.

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